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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Towards an integrated library network of the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly his comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Towards an integrated library network of the United Nations system" (A/47/669).

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* A/48/50.

Comments of the Secretary-General

I. GENERAL

1. The Secretary-General is pleased to note the emphasis on the need to invigorate the role of libraries and enhance the services they provide. The report strengthens a basis on which libraries, both at Headquarters and Geneva, may build in the direction of a truly system-wide library information network and supports the concept that the information management of United Nations documentation, including research and reference materials, is crucial for effective management of operational, financial and human resources.

2. The thrust of the report is well taken. However, it could have benefited from an additional analysis of the extent to which the investment in the creation of an integrated library network would be cost-effective and cost-saving in comparison with existing arrangements.

3. The Secretary-General notes that the libraries of the regional commissions are given very cursory treatment in the body of the report and in the conclusions, even where, in certain cases, they have played a very active role in the design and implementation of computerized information systems. The commissions maintain direct contact with Member States; they are the direct recipients of the information Member States generate and a source for information requested by Member States on social and economic issues.

4. For example, the ECLAC Library was first to introduce computerized data processing in 1978 and still is ahead, in this respect, of other United Nations system libraries outside New York and Geneva. Information there is now both processed and disseminated with the most advanced technology. The format design of its bibliographic entries, based on UNESCO international standards, has been widely disseminated in the region and adopted by many institutions in order to afford the opportunity to exchange information.

II. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Paragraph 8

5. The major contribution that each agency can make as a first step towards creating a system-wide library network is to assume responsibility for indexing its own documents and making the records available on-line and/or through a CD-ROM (Compact Disc - Read Only Memory) product to all other agencies.

Paragraph 14

6. Since numerous information services and databases exist in substantive departments, and, furthermore, much of this information is non-bibliographic and quite specific to the goals of a particular department, it may be unrealistic to assume that all will be amenable to coordination either by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at Headquarters or the central library of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). As a minimum, however, it should be the policy of each United Nations organization that the central library be given

access to any databases that are made available to any other institution outside the author department.

7. When the integrated system at Headquarters is purchased and installed, it should allow for networking with the United Nations Secretariat and United Nations system libraries "to enable the libraries of the United Nations to function as a network of cooperating information centres within a wider framework of cooperation with the libraries of other organizations of the system". 1/ A unique United Nations system network is one option, another option, which would provide general world-wide access almost immediately, is INTERNET. The report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on harmonization of informatics systems mentions facilitation of access to United Nations information systems by Member States as one of the reasons for joining INTERNET. 2/ Since this involves access to United Nations systems as well as United Nations produced databases, the Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Information Systems (ACCIS) is the appropriate body to explore use of INTERNET as a server for United Nations system databases.

Paragraphs 17 to 21

8. Computerization of bibliographic files in the United Nations libraries began in 1969 in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library with the United Nations Documents Information System (UNDIS), a batch mode system for the production of Indexes to United Nations documents (UNDEX). In 1979, UNDIS was replaced by the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS), an on-line system with a variety of bibliographic, factual, full-text and authority/thesaurus files covering both United Nations and non-United Nations materials. Since its introduction in 1979 by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, UNBIS has greatly expanded the services provided, and, accordingly, the number of users has steadily increased, as shown in table 1. Looking towards a future network, the Library sought to facilitate access to UNBIS through a complete revamping of the system in 1982 to comply with the international exchange format developed by UNESCO, the Common Communication Format (CCF), and to use AACR2 as its standard for cataloguing. CCF is compatible with MARC formats, and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has successfully converted its data for several projects.

Table 1

Dag Hammarskjöld Library: UNBIS use statistics
(November 1992)

Users with on-line access to the UNBIS system

United Nations (Headquarters)	385
Regional commissions	128
Other United Nations organizations	157
Specialized agencies	76
Missions	71
Government offices	15
TOTAL	832

9. In 1985, the UNOG Library became a major partner in UNBIS and began entering data directly to UNBIS in both DOCFILE and CATFILE, as well as contributing data to the UNBIS support files, AGENDA, ATHFILE, SERSYM, and THESAU.

10. During 1985 and 1986, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library introduced a new retrieval system. This retrieval system, called UNIQUE, is a menu driven system. UNIQUE enables the searcher to access the UNBIS data from many different access points. Introduction of UNIQUE combined with the introduction of dial-up access for mission and non-Secretariat users increased the use of UNBIS considerably - from around 7,000 searches performed in 1986 to about 43,000 searches carried out in 1992. During this time, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library provided training in UNBIS retrieval to more than 500 users.

11. In 1990 personal computers were introduced in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. This encouraged development of a number of PC-based applications which replaced manual operations in several library departments. Training was provided for the majority of library staff members in using DOS and WordPerfect and for some in Micro CDS/ISIS. The introduction of the Micro CDS/ISIS program at that time also contributed to developments in this area. Some of the applications are noted below:

(a) Using the Micro CDS/ISIS program to download data from the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been able to utilize cataloguing from other libraries and therefore obviate the necessity for completely original cataloguing in almost 60 per cent of cases. The Library must still modiry cataloguing taken from external bibliographic sources, as the UNBIS thesaurus and UNBIS name authority files are used for access, thus assuring compatibility of search terms throughout the UNBIS system;

(b) The Dag Hammarskjöld Library requested a copy of the United Nations Serial (UNSER) database from ACCIS in order to use their data to fill in gaps in the cataloguing of United Nations and specialized agencies' serials in the collection. ACCIS data was converted to UNBIS format, amended as necessary and then loaded to the main UNBIS files;

(c) Micro CDS/ISIS is also being used in its Arabic and Chinese versions to produce the Arabic and Chinese editions of the indices to proceedings of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Because of the inability of existing systems to cope with non-Roman language characters, it is expected that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library will begin to use this program as the beginning of an automated catalogue of Arabic language publications in early 1993;

(d) As a collection development tool, the Inactive, Rejected, Withdrawn Serials (IRWS) file plays an important role in serials operations, not only by providing the checklisters with a more accurate, reliable and efficient tool for serials titles control, but also by providing the serials librarian with an alternative tool to review previous decisions taken on the selection of titles. This file was also developed using Micro CDS/ISIS;

(e) The Reference and Users Services staff have used Micro CDS/ISIS to automate certain ready reference files which had previously been maintained

manually. Automation of these files allows for easier access and maintenance. These files include REFLIST, a comprehensive listing of reference materials held within the United Nations and specialized agencies collection, REFDEC, a listing of declarations adopted by the League of Nations, the United Nations and the specialized agencies, REFCON, a listing of United Nations conferences, meetings, colloquia and symposia from 1946 to the present, REFJIU, a listing of all published JIU reports including reference to comments by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the Distance File which contains land distances in miles and kilometres between numerous cities in the world, a Newspaper File which lists over 100 newspapers from around the world that are available in the Periodical Reading Room, and the Statistical Awareness File, used to create an acquisitions list of material received in the Statistical Branch Library for distribution within the Department.

12. In 1990, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library concluded an agreement with the Research Libraries Group for the inclusion of the UNBIS DOCFILE and CATFILE on the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), which is a major bibliographic utility available world wide. The Systems Development Group provided training and support service to Dag Hammarskjöld Library staff and UNOG Library staff in the use of RLIN. These records are now available to any library with access to the network.

13. To enhance service to users, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is establishing access to all the United Nations system databases. At present, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has access to the databases of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and soon the World Health Organization (WHO), through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The Dag Hammarskjöld Library will be looking into the possibility of exchanging available CD-ROM products from United Nations system agencies for UNBIS on CD-ROM.

14. Currently, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library also has access to the New York Computer Section (NYCS) Time Sharing Option, UNDICS (United Nations Database Information Centre System), UNPRESS (United Nations Press Releases and Journal), UNSIS (United Nations Statistical Information System), TELENET (X.25 Gateway), UNTERM (United Nations Terminology Reference System), NYCSMANL (United Nations NYCS Users' Manual), NYCSMAIL (NYCS Electronic Mail), TPXADMIN (TPX Administration), and the International Computing Centre (ICC) at Geneva. Non-United Nations information systems include: the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) databases and specialized agencies databases (FAO, ILO, UNESCO and UNIDO and soon WHO as well), INTERNET (a world-wide network of networks), Dialog (over 300 bibliographic and full text databases on different subjects), NEXIS (foreign and domestic newspapers, journals and wire services), LEXIS (foreign, domestic and international legal database), RLIN, and, for copies of periodical articles, UMI (University Microfilms International) (see annex). So far, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library does not have access to other valuable United Nations databases such as the Treaty Database of the Legal Office and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Resource Information Database (GRID), nor to databases of some of the specialized agencies. Policy decisions regarding distribution are pending at the inter-agency level to have both print and non-print sources made available to

other United Nations system libraries either free of charge or through exchange.

Paragraphs 22 to 23

15. UNIQUE is a very powerful retrieval system, offering features not generally available in On-line Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), including searching on a large number of fields, exploding searches, multiple formatting and sorting options for data retrieved. Its "relative unfriendliness at the entry stage" as well as the awkwardness of any menu-driven system for advanced users, has been addressed in the requests for proposals by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library for both the integrated library system and for the CD-ROM product. The report's observation that LION (Library Information On-line), the Vienna International Centre (VIC) Library's database is available for searching as an OPAC in "what appears to be an easier and more user-friendly way" is noted and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library will look at the OPACs of the other United Nations system libraries, especially those which are considered to be user-friendly, to see which options they provide that can be adapted for an UNBIS retrieval system. To ensure a more user-friendly UNBIS, UNBIS users will be interviewed in order to find out which search options they use the most, which are essential or useful and which are idle.

Paragraph 25

16. The success of the information services provided by the existing Dag Hammarskjöld Library branch libraries (Legal and Statistical) and the increased focus of the United Nations in the areas of peace-keeping operations and observer missions and the need for more timely access to information to support this work has led to the proposal that a separate branch library serving the Department of Political Affairs be established in proximity to those offices. In this way, it will be possible to concentrate research close to an office desk allowing for optimal use of information resources and still maintain central coordination of processing, purchasing and management of information resources.

Paragraph 26

17. The urging of the ACABQ that "every effort be made to install a [library integrated] system compatible with that being used in Geneva" will be adhered to.

Paragraphs 27 to 39

18. The report has analysed the major reforms undertaken in the management of collections, new information technology and the modernization of the UNOG Library in the years following the 1984 JIU report on the subject (A/39/299). The report's observations on the need for UNOG reference libraries and units to be hooked up to the main library information system are welcome, and action will be taken at UNOG to move towards effecting them.

Paragraphs 40 to 42

19. The report encouraged the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) to undertake a review of its basic policy with respect to library services, including an evaluation of their financial aspects, which could have received fuller treatment in the report. While final conclusions have yet to be reached, it should be noted that UNOV pays to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) almost $7,000 per Professional staff member per biennium to acquire literature and to obtain reference and related library services. In addition, virtually every UNOV entity has a reference unit to supplement services provided by the Vienna International Centre (VIC) Library. These matters, together with a detailed analysis of user requirements, will be further considered as UNOV attempts to achieve both service improvement and cost reduction in respect of library services, especially in the light of the restructuring of the conference and library services programmes.

Paragraph 43

20. The observation in the report that "some requests made by the Vienna International Centre Library are not responded to by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library" is noted. For the sake of clarification, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library did reply to the VIC Library stating that it would not fulfil its requests for photocopies of articles that appear in journals that are not in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and are most certainly in libraries more local to Vienna. Furthermore, the costs that the VIC Library incurs for photocopies from the British Document Supply Centre are in fact less than those incurred by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library when obtaining photocopies from the New York Public Library. Regarding inter-library loan, it is best to make use of local resources rather than directing requests overseas. Cooperative arrangements with local and regional libraries would also increase the resources available to United Nations researchers.

Paragraph 48

21. The VIC Library has implemented the use of bar codes for circulation of materials, and staff member's grounds passes are bar-coded as well. The United Nations as a whole should make every effort to coordinate in this area so that either bar codes or magnetic strips will be linked to a central management system. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library would use information thus recorded for circulation, as well as to keep better control over borrowing privileges, room and department changes and clearances on the departure of staff members.

Paragraphs 49 and 32

22. In contrast with the UNOG Library and the VIC Library, access to databases on CD-ROM is at present severely limited at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. The Library is looking into the acquisition of a CD-ROM network that will enable Secretariat users to access directly the CD-ROM databases from their offices. Future development in this area will be influenced by the rewiring of the Secretariat to create a Secretariat network for all networking applications. As an interim measure the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is in the process of purchasing CD-ROM readers for reference areas, and CD-ROM titles already identified for the collection will be acquired shortly.

Paragraph 102

23. When the rewiring of Headquarters offices is completed the Dag Hammarskjöld Library will have access to all UNBIS databases and the Library's PC-developed databases as well as the possibility of accessing other United Nations Headquarters databases through a Local Area Network (LAN). Through the LAN network it will also be possible for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to access the databases of United Nations bodies located at Headquarters, such as UNDP and UNICEF. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has already requested that it be designated as a node on the LAN.

Paragraph 105

24. The Systems Development Group (SDG) in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library acts in much the same way as the Office of Library and Health Services Literature (HLT) at WHO.

Paragraph 111

25. The recent survey undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat shows that Member States are mostly interested in having access to full texts of documents (79 per cent), resolutions (76 per cent), treaties (72 per cent), press releases (65 per cent), bibliographic and statistical data (53 and 56 per cent, respectively). 3/ The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is already working closely with staff responsible for the optical disk project. With the optical disc system (ODS), full texts of parliamentary documents will be available, and the UNBIS indexing data will be used to provide access to this material. Indexing data from DOCFILE is now transferred to ODS on a daily basis. The staff of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library are working closely with the Technological Innovations Programme of the Office of Conference Services and with the vendor to provide feedback on loading problems, retrieval and effectiveness of the system. Additionally, there are plans to develop an interface between UNBIS and the optical disc system, so that UNBIS users can have a window to the optical disc system and obtain the full texts of documents retrieved via an UNBIS search.

Paragraph 112

26. There are currently 71 mission offices, representing 62 countries, 4/ with access to UNBIS.

Paragraph 113

27. UNBIS is currently available either through NYCS or RLIN. To provide greater accessibility, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library is planning on issuance of a CD-ROM version of UNBIS. The databases to which the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has access are listed in paragraph 14 above.

Paragraph 115

28. The libraries of some agencies, such as UNEP, have not taken advantage of the available technology to access other agencies or network databases, nor have they coordinated their own agency databases in an effective manner. To create an effective and integrated library network within each organization, efforts will continue to define clearly the library's functions within the

organization's information system, to establish internal management objectives and workload and staffing standards and to maintain continuous communication with users, as suggested in paragraphs 4 (g), (h) and (i) of the report.

Paragraph 116

29. In this connection, the Secretary-General recognized that, while more than 56 missions have access to the New York Computer Section (NYCS) mainframe computer, there has been no systematic, centralized effort to keep missions informed, and this has contributed to the overall confusion and frustration among missions regarding access to United Nations material. 5/ Arrangements will be made with the Electronic Services Division (ESD) to issue a press release on accessibility to United Nations databases and send it to all missions.

Paragraph 119

30. Among the activities to be initiated in order to cope with various information needs is training. It should be noted that UNBIS training is ongoing for Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Secretariat staff, as well as staff of the Permanent Missions and all other users. Because of the frequent turnover of personnel at the Permanent Missions, recurrent requests for UNBIS training are submitted.

Paragraph 121

31. ACCIS has found that there has been little progress in making available the enormous amount of information generated by the system to Member States at the national level or to other government and national institutions. The two main factors limiting access are organizational policy on access and technical issues. ACCIS or its Ad Hoc Committee on Inter-Library Cooperation are the appropriate bodies to explore the possibility of including at least the major United Nations databases on the INTERNET. Through this world-wide network, valuable United Nations data could be accessed from almost anywhere.

Paragraph 123

32. An additional modernization option is the introduction of electronic mail, a computer-to-computer form of communication which is a highly effective and cost-efficient mode of information transfer.

Paragraph 128

33. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has cooperated on several ventures with other United Nations departments, including the former Centre on Transnational Corporations, by mounting its database, TNCBIS, on UNBIS. Recently, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library cooperated with the UNOG Library in providing technical support for the production of a major bibliography on human rights in preparation for the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights.

Paragraph 130

34. With regard to the optical disc, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the UNOG Library will assume the leadership role among the reference collections/units within their respective duty stations, and will cooperate jointly with other United Nations system libraries. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library will be responsible for the libraries of the regional commissions.

Paragraph 131

35. INTERNET should be considered for use as an international database server. The United Nations libraries will continue to participate in exchanges of data, preferably on CD-ROM, and share experience by means of electronic mail, teleconferencing and on-site practical work.

Paragraph 132

36. The United Nations libraries have always tried to adhere to strict standards for the recording of data in their databases. The possibilities for building cooperative services were recognized early in the development of UNBIS and have been a factor in planning all development since that time. Certain management systems being introduced can have a beneficial impact on streamlining library operations. For example, the introduction of bar coding or magnetic signals on grounds passes would enable the libraries to have better control over circulation.

Paragraphs 143 to 144

37. The United Nations libraries are represented on the ACCIS Technical Panel on Inter-Library Cooperation Standards and Management, which provides a welcome opportunity to facilitate closer cooperation, information flow and standardization. But there is a need for a more permanent mechanism in this area to plan future developments. If financial constraints do not allow creation of a permanent inter-library panel at this time, the possibility of establishing an ad hoc committee with a five-year term would be considered as an alternative.

Recommendation 1

38. The United Nations supports and is actively working towards the goal of "an effective and integrated library network" through the acquisition and implementation of its integrated library system, adhering to international standards for the storage of data and to guidelines of the Electronic Services Division for new applications, participation in the Integrated Management Information System and participation in the ODS project.

39. However, the establishment of library networks within and between United Nations system organizations is a goal yet to be achieved. The introduction and use of new information technologies in United Nations system libraries/documentation centres requires the adoption of common policies, standards and procedures. Each library/documentation centre will have to be viewed as part of an integrated system.

40. Special emphasis will be placed on the gradual introduction, optimal use and compatibility of computerized systems. Priority is to be given to the introduction of new information technologies that will enable libraries to transcend their traditional function and to become information clearing-houses directly involved in the activities and life of the organizations they serve.

41. The Secretary-General's bulletin entitled "Procedure for the establishment and maintenance of branch libraries and reference centres in the United Nations Secretariat at Headquarters", 6/ which addressed problems regarding coordination, standards of service, duplication and the establishment of new reference collections in the Secretariat at Headquarters (see para. 16 above), is to be expanded to encompass technological innovations and the need for connectivity between information systems and strictly enforced. Coordination through the Dag Hammarskjöld Library would ensure that there would be a central record of all information resources available at Headquarters, while either allowing departmental reference collections/units to remain administratively independent or merging them as branch libraries administratively under the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. The existing reference collections under the Department of Political Affairs would be merged as a first step towards the establishment of the proposed branch library for this Department. In a similar manner, reference collections in the area of economic and social development would be merged along with the present Dag Hammarskjöld Library Statistical Branch Library to become the branch library serving the relevant departments. Accordingly, a review of all existing reference collections in the Secretariat is envisaged.

42. It should be stressed that the establishment of a dedicated integrated network for statistical data represents a special case. Statistical data carried in most agency files do not have the requisite comparability; they often differ in terms of concepts, definitions and classifications. For those reasons, the kind of network envisioned in the report cannot serve as a basis on which major agencies reference statistical information or even exchange statistical data. Due to this, any network designed for the dissemination, exchange and promotion of access to statistical data should be centred in the Statistical Office at Headquarters and should be contingent on standardization and improvement in the reporting of international statistics.

Recommendation 2

43. The Secretary-General endorses this recommendation and intends to address the problems of limited access and technical standardization at the inter-agency level. Special attention would be given to making the information resources of the system available either free of charge or at minimal cost to all United Nations system libraries.

44. Central libraries will enhance their involvement with subsidiary or internal documentation centres or units, even the smallest ones, in order to give them more systematic access to technological aids implemented by central libraries and to enable them to participate in the development of common tools. The establishment of local coordination committees, under the leadership of central libraries, would facilitate more direct and active cooperation.

Recommendations 3 and 4

45. As the starting-point towards achieving the goal of creating an integrated library network, the Secretary-General intends to undertake a thorough review of the library conditions of the United Nations organizations away from Headquarters, as well as the utility of such libraries in providing information to end users, including Member States.

46. The United Nations will make its expertise in database production and management more widely available to libraries, documentation centres and reference units within the Organization. Since numerous databases have been established within the United Nations system without a coordinated approach, a special effort will be made towards the adoption of common presentation standards and a unified format. Particular attention will be given to user-friendliness of user interfaces and to integration of bibliographical databases and text banks; the potential of making use of systems using artificial intelligence and of expert systems will be investigated.

47. More specifically, attention will focus on the development of systems, taking into account the diversity of user needs, proper interfacing of bibliographical databases and optical disc systems and the production of CD-ROMs, the aim being to develop electronic publications of immediate interest for the membership and staff of United Nations agencies.

48. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library will increase its efforts to promote cooperation between United Nations system libraries. Firstly, by acting as a catalyst towards implementation of the recommendations of the present report and, secondly, by providing leadership in establishing policies and guidelines. Each system library has its strengths and will be encouraged to share these with other system libraries.

49. The UNOG Library should be granted special status as an historical library, since it maintains the collections inherited from the League of Nations and has a special mandate as an international research centre, under the provisions of its constituting agreement (with the Rockefeller Foundation). In addition, as the central United Nations library in Geneva, it is expected to ensure coordination between specialized documentation centres and to lead the local network of libraries and documentation centres.

50. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in close cooperation with the UNOG Library, will coordinate the policy of the United Nations in the area of documentation, ensuring adherence to common international standards, maintenance of jointly developed databases and concerted implementation of new information technologies.

51. Section Q (Part II) of the Organization Manual 7/ will be revised as soon as the overall restructuring of the Secretariat, which is being undertaken at present, is completed.

Recommendation 5

52. The Secretary-General will implement this recommendation. Towards this end, he aims at establishing an inter-library panel covering a host of issues such as shared databases, network development, inter-library cooperation and standardization.

53. However, if current financial restraints existing within the United Nations system, as well as the newly emerged priorities, will not allow for conducting the work of the panel through suggested regular meetings, the Secretary-General may rely on focal points in every organization assigned to assess existing and future needs and propose effective coordinated measures to implement the envisaged modernization. Their inputs will be analysed and summarized by a central focal point at Headquarters with a view to formulating a mutually acceptable course of action. Thus, a mechanism of interactive networking would be used rather than the machinery of formal meetings.

54. Experience shows that libraries with programmers/analysts and other computer science specialists on their staff have a higher success rate in the implementation of new information technologies than those lacking such staff resources. On-the-job training cannot produce full-fledged computer applications specialists. Formal training is needed so that the staff concerned may keep abreast of fast-changing technologies. In addition, United Nations agencies should make every effort to recruit librarians with specialized training in computer science.

55. The Secretary-General also welcomes the establishment, under the programme of work of ACCIS for 1992-1993, of a technical group on inter-library cooperation, standardization and inter-library management. This group, whose mandate includes three main topics - inter-library cooperation, new information technologies and the relationship between Headquarters and decentralized libraries - is expected to offer practical solutions to issues relating to the evolution and development of libraries in the United Nations system. The group will submit a report in 1993 on improving inter-library cooperation within the United Nations system.

Recommendation 6

56. It is the intent of the Secretary-General to continue to recruit technically skilled staff and provide continuous technical training to existing staff. Efforts will be made to secure funding required for staff attendance at conferences and various meetings that address issues of interest to the future of information services for the United Nations system.

57. Adequate training is a key prerequisite for efficient and successful implementation of projects and programmes. Significant steps have already been taken towards training librarians, including: introduction to computer science; special training sessions on access to commercial data banks and the use of international servers; and introduction to optical disc systems and

CD-ROM products. In view of the fast pace of technological change and of the increasingly specialized character of functions performed by librarians, such endeavours will continue to be pursued. Among other things, special training sessions on new information technologies will be organized for the benefit of librarians in order to enable them to meet the demands of a new generation of documentary services, which will emphasize user-friendly access to information by the general public.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1), para. 39.59.

2/ E/1992/78, para. 25 (b).

3/ Ibid., para. 9.

4/ Some missions have access through both their New York and Geneva offices.

5/ E/1992/78, para. 3.

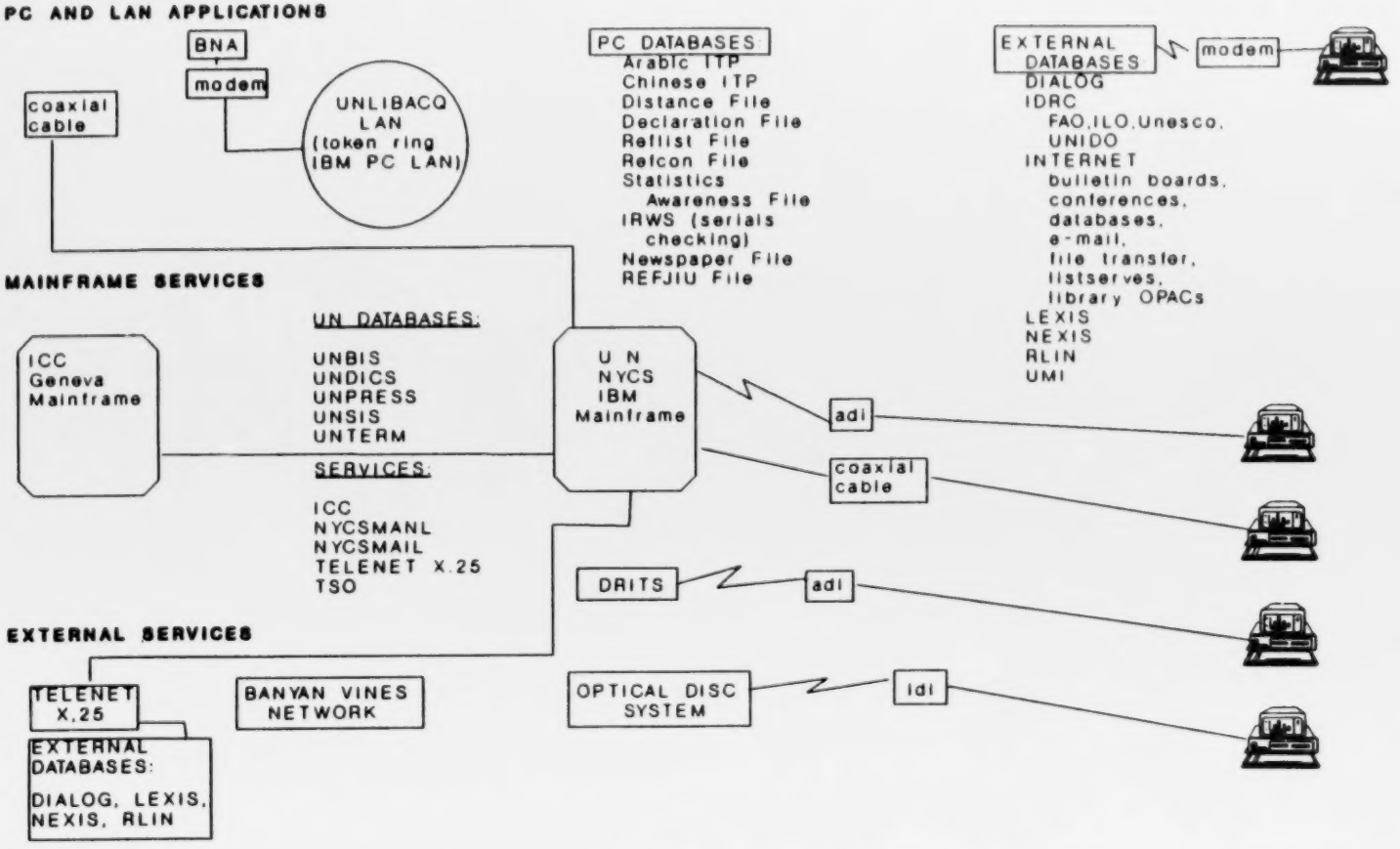
6/ ST/SGB/152.

7/ ST/SGB/Organization/Section Q/Rev.2 (Part II).

ANNEX

Dag Hammarskjöld Library

Major computer applications and services



Note: ADI = asynchronous interface.
LDI = landmark data interface.